

INTERNET VIRUS

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam President, it has been so wonderful to be in Tennessee over the past couple of weeks and to have the opportunity to listen to Tennesseans. We have listened and talked to local elected officials and teachers and parents from one corner of the State to another. They are very aware and are truly focused on the challenges we are going to be facing this fall in just a few weeks.

Some of our school systems in Tennessee are going to be going back to school the first week of August. They have a lot of questions as to whether they are going to end up with classes meeting in person or online.

Up until now, students have relied on virtual schooling platforms to stay connected to their teachers, and it is likely that in many communities, this system will continue at least through the fall semester.

Relying on Google and other educational software providers keeps teachers and families safe from COVID-19, but these programs come with their own brand of hazards. Our increased reliance on Big Tech has highlighted just how vulnerable we are when things go awry. Even the platforms that have become commonplace over the years pose risks and not only just risks to children. You need look no further than last week's Twitter meltdown for evidence of how quickly a hacker or even an insider can turn a few tweets into a threat.

I will tell you this: In Tennessee, we have a lot of security moms. Those security moms you hear so much about are really back in full force. They are concerned. They are paying close attention, and they are not going to back off of the Googles and the Facebooks and the Instagrams. They want to see these companies held accountable and transparent about how they follow and use data because when they see their children spending hours staring at TikTok or YouTube, they are beginning to see and fear a vulnerability. When they see their children using their classroom software, they begin to see and fear a vulnerability.

They haven't forgotten that back in 2015, the Electronic Frontier Foundation filed a complaint with the FTC against Google alleging that their Google for Education platform was exploiting students' personal information and potentially exposing it to third parties. A 2017 report confirmed and expanded on these concerns.

These programs have continued, but Big Tech has left parents with more questions than answers about what is happening with their children's data. How are they pulling in this information? How are they tracking these children? What are they doing with the Chromebook in schools program? Who has this information on their children, and what are they doing with it? What kinds of files are they building about our children?

You know, I have said that one of the questions we should ask and work until

we can find an answer is, Who owns the virtual you? Who owns it? Because the virtual you is you and your information online. It is you and your presence online. This is what parents fear.

I will tell you, that fear is complicated because of the rise in mandatory use of technology by students. It has prompted me, along with several of our colleagues here, to ask the FTC to launch a major investigation into how these platforms protect student privacy. That is the question they have to answer. Are you protecting it? If not, why not? If not, are you selling it to the highest bidder? Are you profiting from this educational information?

These security moms know it is not just their kids' safety and privacy at risk. They do their banking online, their shopping online, and they have had to deal with the nightmare of having their identity stolen during one of the many infamous retail hacks.

NATIONAL DEFENSE AUTHORIZATION ACT

Madam President, they also know that these risks aren't just a domestic problem. They have seen bombshell reports about consumer data flowing freely between popular apps and servers in China—of course, China. They have heard about how Chinese companies, all beholden to the Chinese Communist Party—again, as I say so often to American businesses, if you are in business with a company in China, you are in business with the Chinese Communist Party. They know that these companies—all beholden to the Chinese Communist Party—steal intellectual property, build vulnerabilities into their hardware, and tempt tech junkies with flashy mobile apps.

The entanglement doesn't end there. I have spoken on multiple occasions about the clear danger posed by our stifling and overly permissive relationship with China.

We have a duty to address the threats we have uncovered so far and anticipate future problems before they reach our shores. This year's national defense authorization legislation does this by targeting problems in both the public and private sectors.

We know and have known for some time that the agenda of the Chinese Communist Party poses an existential threat to the West. This year's NDAA includes funding and other resources for the Pacific Deterrence Initiative, which is a comprehensive strategy focused on confronting Beijing's influence on other countries and maintaining a U.S. and allied presence in the region. We also authorized a pilot program that will allow cyber specialists from the National Guard to participate in information sharing and analysis between Federal, State, and local officials.

We can use our military and our allies to control a threat that lives half a world away, but how do we stop that threat from reaching our shores?

Back in March, I worked with Senator MENENDEZ to introduce the bipartisan SAM-C Act to secure our phar-

maceutical supply chain and protect American consumers from shady Chinese manufacturers. In this year's NDAA, I expanded on that idea and fought for language that will require a percentage of what we call critical technologies to be assembled in the United States or by a close ally.

We are also going to invest even more in machine and advanced manufacturing research at Oak Ridge National Laboratory. Scientists at Oak Ridge will work directly with researchers at the University of Tennessee to develop new technology that will make American companies more competitive.

I will tell you that the University of Tennessee and Oak Ridge Institute are a wonderful partnership. As we work toward 21st-century capabilities for warfare, this is exactly the type of partnership we need to see more of.

Being from Tennessee, which is home to multiple military installations, I know that national defense starts and ends at home, so I secured increased funding that is desperately needed to repair and update Army deployment infrastructure. I know that my friends at Fort Campbell will be able to put that to good use on their runway ramps.

The Defense bill will also fully fund new mission-essential aircraft, including 47 Chinook helicopters for our posts in Tennessee and technologies that will allow those famous Reapers to one day be stationed in the Volunteer State.

We are also finally going to secure some properly fitting body armor for servicewomen, which unbelievably is still unheard of in 2020.

We will likely spend the rest of this week hashing out the finer details of the NDAA before we bring up the final bill for a vote. I encourage my colleagues to consider just how interconnected we are with both our allies and our adversaries. I want them to think about the great power competition and the threats that exist from China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran—I call those four the new axis of evil. I would encourage them to remember that the threats we face require action at every single level, whether they surface at home or half a world away.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BOOZMAN. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. BOOZMAN. Madam President, I rise today in support of the fiscal year 2021 National Defense Authorization Act.

Congress has a constitutional duty under article I, section 8, to provide for the common defense, and the NDAA is one of the key tools that we have to ensure that the United States is capable of defending ourselves and our interests.

This is, hopefully, the 60th consecutive year that Congress will pass the NDAA. In a time of intense partisanship and national division, it is a true testament to the significance of this responsibility and the fact that we have been able to come together in support of the U.S. military for decades, even when the spirit of bipartisanship and compromise is elusive in many other areas.

We all want to ensure that America's servicemembers have the tools and resources they need to perform their duty and to protect our Nation. As we are all aware, threats against the United States, our allies, and interests persist. At a time of increasing risk and dangerous challenges to global security, the United States must lead in creating stability through a strong and modernized military.

Peace through strength is a proven concept that reinforces American deterrence and produces greater global security. That is why it is so important to, yet again, come together and advance this important bill, the NDAA.

We need to strengthen our military posture, enact policies that encourage deterrence, project leadership, and deploy innovative strategies to maximize advantages that serve our national security, reassure our allies, and help defend our freedoms and ideals at home and abroad.

The fiscal year 2021 NDAA does this by strengthening American deterrence through investing in greater capabilities in support of priorities listed in the national defense strategy and ensuring America's servicemembers are ready so, when challenged, they will prevail in any conflict.

This NDAA maintains readiness gains made over the previous years, while making significant investments in modernization and enhancing resources to better support and care for servicemembers and their families. It provides a 3-percent pay raise for our troops and reemphasizes a focus on training to ensure that our servicemembers can conduct missions safely.

It also serves the interests of our military at a time when they need vital support and assistance. I am especially pleased that the legislation continues a push I have made related to military spousal employment and also provides another step in the right direction to ensure servicemembers' families have options for high-quality and accessible childcare.

The continued commitment to reforms in the military's privatized housing and health systems reflected in this legislation are also wins for our servicemembers and their loved ones.

Additionally, this year's NDAA goes further to increase manning levels in order to better support the demand for our forces around the world.

I am pleased this bill includes a few of my priorities aimed at supporting our deployed servicemembers in the State of Arkansas.

After my recent oversight visit to Iraq, I worked to ensure that the Army

has a plan to evaluate and deploy all resources to protect our servicemembers in the theater from any kind of attack. Some of this capability is also built in my home State. I thank my colleagues for including my measure, which I believe will bring many benefits to our warfighters in the defense industry in Arkansas.

Additionally, after meeting with leaders from the 188th Air Wing at Fort Smith, it was clear to me that our servicemembers need more support when it comes to options for childcare and assistance. That is why I have worked on a provision to direct the Department of Defense to research, report, and provide recommendations to Congress on how to provide 24-hour childcare to military families who are assigned to around-the-clock rotational units at home.

I welcome the inclusion of this initiative in this year's NDAA and am grateful to the Armed Services Committee, which also recognizes its real and urgent need for our military families.

I have also filed an amendment to this year's NDAA focused on meeting the needs of our servicemembers who are undergoing routine quarantines due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of our servicemembers are required to quarantine when they are relocated to another military installation, leaving them with days to weeks of inactivity and isolation.

My amendment requires the Department of Defense to develop measures to ensure personal and professional development of our servicemembers while in quarantine, including physical activity and educational resources.

Defending our Nation, allies, and interests means providing the Department of Defense with the tools and authorities it needs to carry out that mission. This is the Federal Government's most basic function and responsibility.

It is important to get this work done in a bipartisan way and with broad agreement. My colleagues on the Armed Services Committee, under the leadership of Chairman INHOFE and Ranking Member REED, have provided a great example in sending this bill out of committee with an overwhelming vote of support. Their work has helped to ensure that the fiscal year 2021 NDAA establishes and builds on policies that strengthen the ability of the United States to safeguard the Nation and provide the support and assistance that our allies have come to depend on. Doing so helps make us and the rest of the world safer.

The fiscal year 2021 NDAA supports the national defense strategy, our servicemembers, and the broader military community. It deserves wide support in this body, and I encourage my colleagues to join me in approving the NDAA and building on the U.S. legacy of unmatched military leadership, capability, and superiority.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. INHOFE. I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BOOZMAN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

REMEMBERING JOHN LEWIS

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I want to make a couple of comments. It is going to be a very significant week. We know pretty much what we are going to be doing with the defense authorization bill, which I believe, and most people believe, is the most significant bill each year. We have things that need to be done. We came to a great agreement prior to the Fourth of July in terms of the numbers of amendments and the things we had to get accomplished, and I think there is total agreement with that.

We had a tragedy that took place during the last 2 weeks while we were in recess. One affected a friend of mine, JOHN LEWIS. We had a real interesting—the 100th Congress, we went in, I think, in 1987, and the 100th Congress had a lot of really great people.

JOHN LEWIS is one of them.

JOHN LEWIS and I became friends. You couldn't get two guys further apart philosophically than JOHN LEWIS and me. Yet we were always close. I watched how peacefully he could get things done. He is someone I got to know quite well.

We had a lot of others in that class. Jon Kyl has been very active in recent years. He came back from retirement temporarily. He was in that class. We had BEN CARDIN. He and I became close friends. I think he was in the State legislature first. Lamar Smith was one who was very, very helpful to me all those years. Lamar Smith is from South Texas. Freddie Upton—we referred to him as "Little Freddie Upton"—is probably the most recent one we had who is no longer in that same position. But JOHN LEWIS was, and I had the honor of coming to Congress and being in the same freshman class with him.

Ultimately, he was a courageous fighter in every part of his life. He fought for the civil rights movement on the bridge to Selma, as a Freedom Rider, and through his work on the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. He consistently did a great and peaceful job. He fought for his constituents and the causes he believed in. He was a fighter. He would not take no for an answer.

Up until the very end, he fought cancer. Like everything else, he fought it with courage and honor.

The conscience of Congress may no longer be here, but his legacy for his selfless service has been imparted to every one of us who served with him and got to know him well. It seems like the ones who knew him the best were those of us who served over in the other body, in the House.